

# Win-win' or 'lose-win' arena: Negotiations of the zoning formats of the Galapagos Marine Reserve, Ecuador



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The Galapagos Marine Reserve (GMR) was created in 1998. The GMR became a MPA of 138,000 km<sup>2</sup> in which industrial fishing activities became prohibited and fishing activity became exclusive right of the local small-scale fleet. The creation of the GMR brought a co-management format for this MPA following a multiple-use zoning format (GNPS, 1999). In 2014, a new management instrument was produced and approved ('Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos' GNPS, 2014), which integrated the terrestrial section of the park and the marine reserve as an unified management and conservation area. On November 2014, the Galapagos National Park Directorate approved a participatory strategy to formulate the new zoning system for the protected areas of Galapagos (aka ZAP, Spanish acronym). This participatory process took place for almost two years, and offered time and space for stakeholders to express their opinions, concerns and perceptions of this zoning format while negotiating the zoning. On early 2016, the ZAP was drafted, based on the contributions provided at the participatory exercises and these gave space to a "land/sea-use based" format for zoning, including four categories of use: conservation (or No Take Zones, aka NTZ), sustainable use, transition, and intangible. In March 2016, and despite the advance of the participatory process that contributed to the ZAP, a 'top-down' decision was made by a Presidential Decree that was issued creating an enlarged 'Marine Sanctuary' around the northernmost Galapagos islands: Darwin and Wolf, all these without previous knowledge of relevant stakeholders and without them being informed.

Photo: *The fish market, where fishers sell their daily catch to locals and tourists. Puerto Ayora, Galapagos, Ecuador. 2019. ©Juan Manuel Garcia*

## Location:

Galapagos Archipelago (fishing areas within the Galapagos Marine Reserve), Ecuador

## Ecosystem type:

Marine

## Main gear:

Hook & line, Hookah diving, vertical-modified long-line

## Target species:

lobsters, demersal fishes, pelagic fishes, chitons

## Vessel type:

Small fiber-glass vessels, small wood vessels, mother boats (9, 5, and 10 m length, respectively)

## No. of small-scale fishers:

1100



2016 decree brought down the almost two-year process of negotiation of the zoning systems (2001 and 2014) by searching an agreed scenario for a new zoning for Galapagos Protected Areas. It mapped the four land/sea-use categories around the archipelago, including the 'network of conservation or no-take zones' that also incorporated the newly created marine sanctuary.



## Justice in context

Types of justice:

- **Distributive**
- **Social**
- **Economic**
  - Market
  - Infrastructure/wellbeing
  - Regulatory
- **Procedural**
  - Environmental
  - COVID-19 related

The declaration of the Darwin and Wolf Sanctuary in 2016 represented an example of a 'top-down' decision, taken without involving those direct stakeholders. Our analysis of the proposed "ZAP plus the Darwin and Wolf Sanctuary", hereafter called "ZAP+", shows disparities at conceptual and methodological scales. The ZAP+ format decreased the fishing grounds of traditional users of the MPA, whilst effectively re-distributing the costs and benefits of conservation. The costs are calculated considering the expected loss of fish landings coming from areas that will not be longer available due to the fishing grounds restriction. It is estimated that for the finfish and tuna fishery, this might represent about 43% of the total annual catch of these fisheries (Viteri et al. 2019); although this impact could be lessened by the spillover effect that could potentially result from a successful implementation of NTZ.

Another disparity is seen by shifting the category use of the areas where fishing and visiting sites are located from extraction to NTZ. In this case, the ZAP + affects in a positive manner 20 out of 86 visiting sites for tourism. Currently, those sites produce 20% of the revenues generated by visiting sites (Viteri et al. 2019). This conservation quality upgrading of these areas could result in an enhancement of the visiting experience; and could be translated into an increase of the visitors' consumer surplus. For instance, nature-based tourism literature states an improvement of the ecosystems' conservation could enrich the experience of visitors and raise their willingness to pay between 5-250% (Barr & Mourato, 2009; Emang et al., 2016; Peters & Hawkins, 2009; Viteri-Mejia & Brandt, 2015).

### Definition of small-scale fisheries

Special Regulations for the Fishing Activity in the Galapagos Marine Reserve (2008) states: Art 3. "For the purposes of this regulation, artisanal fishing activity is understood as that carried out by artisanal fishers duly authorized, for the use of existing bio-aquatic species in the GMR, in the phases of extraction and marketing." Executive Decree (2016) indicates: Art. 1.2. Small-scale fishery is the activity conducted in person, directly, on a regular basis, manually or by using a manual-collecting tool and by using selective fishing gear, with or without the usage of a boat. The small-scale fishers are classified as collectors, coastal, and oceanic fishers.

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## Dealing with justice

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This study engages in a descriptive quantitative analysis of the impacts of the ZAP+ in the Galapagos Marine Reserve. It depicts how a top-down decision, taken under a contested process, disrupted an ongoing participatory dialogue designed to formulate the ZAP in a participatory fashion, and it resulted in an unfair distribution of costs and economic opportunities for stakeholders.

Importantly, after the new Special Law brought the ZAP format to the negotiation table, the Galapagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) designed a strategy to open the discussion among stakeholders and to gather viewpoints from different actors regarding building up of the ZAP process. Despite the good intentions of GNPD at regaining the participatory process, the results were insufficient to guarantee the implementation of the ZAP scheme.

As such, our analysis highlights the opportunity to innovate and create mechanisms for capturing the potential benefits created by the ZAP+ and redirecting them to the sector impacted with/by this new zoning. We suggest that compensation mechanisms for the fishers could be explored, and, could take different formats such as: a fund to improve fisherfolks' retirement and social services, or technical assistance to promote certification labels and manage fishing grounds. These measures ultimately should aim to sustain fish landings for benefiting local fisherfolks and enhance food security in Galapagos. Furthermore, new fisheries governance policies and practices should also consider gender issues at large.



### How to cite

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